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"EDUCATION: FOR WHOM AND FOR WHAT?"

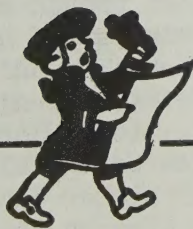
Speakers:

PROFESSOR DENIS W. BROGAN

PROFESSOR HENRY STEELE COMMAGER

Moderator:

DR. SHEPHERD L. WITMAN



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"EDUCATION: FOR WHOM AND FOR WHAT?"

DR. WITMAN: I have before me a stack of clippings which I have selected somewhat at random. Let me read the headlines to you -- "Educators Worry About the Colleges," "Teachers See United States Wasting Talent," "Costs at College Reach New Peaks," "Education is Urged for All," "British Effort Called Inadequate," "Better Teachers are Urged," etc., etc.

I think these demonstrate pretty accurately the broad aspect of the problem which we have for tonight's discussion. There are many aspects of this thing. We have to approach it from the standpoint of its sociological interest -- we have to approach it from the standpoint of its educational interest -- and we have with us tonight two gentlemen, of whom I cannot think any more qualified, to consider our topic of this evening, "Education: For Whom and For What?" These two gentlemen are Professor Henry Steele Commager and Professor Denis W. Brogan. As is our custom, each of them will make a brief preliminary statement on this topic; and we will hear first from Professor Commager.

Professor Commager is a member of the faculty of Columbia University since 1939, and is now Professor of History. He worked with the War Department throughout World War II, and his assignment with the Committee on History of the War took him abroad on many occasions. Professor Commager is the author of many books, including "The American Mind," "Majority Rule and Minority Rights." He now is editing a 45-volume historical series entitled "The Rise of the American Nation." Professor Commager is a Fellow at Peterhouse, Cambridge. May we hear from you, Professor Commager!

PROF. COMMAGER: Mr. Witman, there is always a danger in discussing a topic of this character that we think of education in too concrete terms. Education is not a system -- nothing that is planned; it pretty much grew. We cannot impose any plan upon it or any scheme or any blueprint. Education grows out of a particular soil -- it is nourished by that soil -- it develops to meet particular kinds of problems and is a kind of education that develops in America, in Britain, in France, in Germany and other countries. It's pretty much of a natural product to deal with the problems that arise there and to answer the needs that emerge there.

I think we ought to realize too that we actually had, here in America, longer experience with public education and larger experience with public education than any other people -- only the Scots, I believe, have a comparably long experience, for ours began in the 1640's. We've had broader experience with what we call higher education, that is, with college-university education, than almost any other country, for at a very early stage higher education became very widespread and very popular.

Now we ask the somewhat rhetorical question of "Education: For Whom and For What?" It is, I think, possible to give a very short, though somewhat unsatisfactory answer. I would say education for all who are competent to profit from it and as for what education, for a humane civilization -- a civilization designed to develop not only a high material standard of living, but a high cultural and spiritual standard of living.

Europeans looking at the American educational system, if I may use that term, are customarily impressed with quantity rather than with quality and they're somewhat right on this. They congratulate themselves, many of them, that though Americans may afford more education to more people, they still provide the highest of higher educations. You could look to the education of a small number of scholars and this may be true. But if you look to the education of doctors, lawyers, jurists, engineers, technicians, scientists, librarians, architects, journalists, etc., it is decidedly not true. The United States today provides not only mass education on a scale unprecedented and equal today only in the Soviet Union, but provides as well higher education -- an education in the professions as high as can be found anywhere else on the globe. It is

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increasing to American universities and technological institutions and libraries as many scientists and scholars from other countries come and, I may add, it is increasingly American scholars and American University Presses that carry out large-scale scholarly undertakings, such as Boswell, or Milton, things of that kind.

There is one other consideration, if I am not taking too much time, that we should not lose sight of and that is that we mean by education more than formal elementary, secondary and higher education. Most of us, I think, even in America, tend to think in terms much too restricted, when we think about education. Our educational program embraces not only the schools with approximately 35 million population, but it embraces too libraries and foundations, adult educational programs, which include something close to 30 million persons in their activities of one kind or another. Actually, over one-third of our total population, which means about one-half of our population between the age of 6 and the age of 55 or 60, is involved in education of one kind or another, so that what we have to deal with here is something quite unprecedented in history. We must try to think of it in new and fresh ways.

DR. WITMAN: A frequent visitor to the United States, Prof. Denis W. Brogan, has been described as one who can "explain British politics to Americans in terms of baseball, and American history to the English in terms of cricket." He was a member of the faculty at Oxford prior to his appointment as Professor of Political Science at Cambridge in 1939. Like Professor Commager, Professor Brogan is a prolific writer. His latest book is "Politics in America." Professor Brogan too is a Fellow at Peterhouse, Cambridge. We are pleased to welcome you back to the United States, Professor Brogan, and to the TOWN MEETING platform. Professor Denis W. Brogan!

PROF. BROGAN: I can't compete with Professor Commager in the concreteness of his approach because I am here as an outsider, as a foreigner, and my ideas on the meaning of this title, "Education: For Whom and For What?" are, roughly speaking, British ideas and outside, not American ideas.

I think, first of all, the term "education" ought to be taken up possibly even more widely than Mr. Commager has done it. All societies try to educate their young. They all succeed, more or less, the most primitive savage societies spend a great deal of its time and a great deal of its resources in educating people. All societies keep on educating people all through life, even if they don't do it in an organized way, that is to say, by education in its particular context, I presume we mean education in organized schools, not the kind of education that is given by society in hundreds of ways. For example, since Mayor LaGuardia's time there has been a simple educational campaign not organized by schools. You are advised to "Curb your Dog." That is popular education. It is not run by any educational institution. It is run by the City of New York. A great deal of medieval society or any society is an organization of social life which is educational. Certain things are to be done, certain things are not to be done, but I take it here we are dealing with schools.

I want to emphasize the fact that it is not necessarily schools because, from a European point of view, one of the great American beliefs is that everything that needs to be learned, needs to be taught, and a great many things have to be learned that can't be taught or needn't be taught, so I am going to speak this evening to schools and colleges and institutions of education without for a moment implying that you don't learn the things at your mother's knee, or you don't learn the things in Sunday School, or you don't learn the things in games, or you don't learn the things in looking at municipal regulations, etc.

The next point I'd like to make, and I think it is neglected in many countries, is remembering for whom education is designed. There are many ways of classifying educational systems but one, which I believe is the most important, -- does the educational system aim at producing something useful to the people who design educational systems, or does it design at producing something good for the people who pass through the educational system. Now, it's perfectly easy to see that the totalitarian society -- Hitler's Germany -- Stalin's Russia -- aims at producing useful citizens, aims at people who will be serviceable to the society to educate them and they're trained that way. That was true, for example, also of 19th Century

Japan, 19th Century Prussia. But I think there is a danger of the United States forgetting that that may be true of the United States too and a great deal of the conversation about the democratic system of education, or producing democrats, etc., is, in fact, a method of not educating people for themselves, but educating people for an assumed set of political values which, however good, are deemed to be more important than the individual good of the people who are educated. A great many sins can be committed in the name of democracy as well as in the name of liberty and one of them is loose terms like "a democratic system of education" which neglects to say, what at least I hold to be self-evident, that the object of an educational system is the person who is educated and not the society which educates them.

I don't think at this stage I've really anything more to say, but my general bias will be that no system, whether it is justified or non-justified, can be discussed intelligently if it ever forgets that the final object is the well-being of the people who pass through the school system, and the school system does not exist either for itself or for the well-being of some political body which, by paying for the school system, can decide exactly what is good for people and decide that the schools exist to provide even good citizens, even members of the League of Women Voters, instead of producing human beings with some independent life of their own.

DR. WITMAN: Thank you. Do you want to comment, Professor Commager?

PROF. COMMAGER: Well, I certainly endorse that last observation. I look with great skepticism on such phrases as "education for living." I can't imagine education for not living, or even education for democracy or education for citizenship. I think these things are really byproducts of a sound education which trains the mind and, incidentally, as part of that, trains the character. I think this is to be said about the American educational enterprise -- to use a vague term -- because you can't use a word like "system" -- that perhaps of all countries on the globe, we're the only one rich enough to be able to afford a very large margin of waste in the field of experimentation, but we, and perhaps we alone, seem to be able to afford to keep large numbers of young men and women in school or in college, even though they have no particular interest in things of the mind, rather than to throw them on the labor market or the marriage market, or some other, that we perhaps can better afford than any other people to take a chance on waste, for example, the waste of society, the waste of the expense of maintaining an elaborate education program on the chance that a certain percentage will profit from this. And I do think that compared to the wastage of the old world systems, which waste talent, perhaps our waste is wholly justified in the light of our own abilities and our own wealth as the opposite kind of waste of talent.

DR. WITMAN: But is it justified in relation to the sound objectives of education? Shouldn't we discuss a little bit this point of what are the purposes of education? Professor Brogan gave us a very good lead on that, I think, when he said that the purpose should be to achieve the "educated person," didn't you, Professor Brogan? What do you mean by the "educated person?"

PROF. BROGAN: I didn't use those words. All I meant was that whatever your object should be, it is the person who goes through the system and not the system in itself, or not the political society that runs the system. I also began by pointing out that a great many forms of education don't take place in the schools, so to take up your phrase "educated person" -- what can schools do to produce them. A great many psychologists will tell you that your character is formed, your fundamental education is over by seven. Some of them will probably say that it is prenatal. I'm concerned only with the school education and the educated object of the educational system there, of course, can't be to produce a bad citizen. I mean, that's not a legitimate object. But it may not strictly be to produce a good citizen either. It ought to produce somebody who, as Henry Commager has just said, isn't wasting his gifts, whatever they may be -- is given means to develop them and some of those -- I'd like to take up the waste question -- some of those at first sight may be wasteful, not only in the sense that the boy didn't learn anything much at school, but he learned things that the school didn't intend to teach him. That is what I like to think of as desirable waste. Many school systems fail because they don't have any waste. It's an old

story, has been said again and again, that Eton in England, the most famous English preparatory school in your sense, was a much better school when it was a worse school because it was less systematic. Eton doesn't produce Shelleys today because Shelley was allowed to go bird-nesting. He wasn't given classes in citizenship, or in cricket, if it comes to that. So that wastage is essential because wastage allows for the thing that no system can allow for -- who is the misfit -- who may be, in the long run, the real fit. And educational system which aims at producing people who fit perfect is condemned from the beginning to be wasteful, in the deepest possible sense, and bad schools often produce bright boys because the boys can teach themselves or even bright girls. But the educated man at the end is a person who has ended his life. You can't tell when he has finished being educated until you are quite certain he is dead. The educated person is one who, on the whole, by and large, looking back at his life, doesn't say, "Well, I've wasted most of it. I've done the wrong things. I knew I could have done this -- I did that." A whole series of things -- "I made the wrong marriage, took the wrong job, wrote the wrong book, lived in the wrong state, etc." A man who, roughly speaking, can say "Well, things being what they are, human life being what it is, I haven't really made a mess of it. And you can't tell from the outside. From the outside, Hazlitt -- not Henry Hazlitt, the other Hazlitt, William Hazlitt -- the great essayist, critic and dramatic critic and, quite recently, good painter -- lived an extremely unhappy life. But, on his death bed, he said, "I have had a happy life," by which he meant he had lived as William Hazlitt wanted to live, including making a very bad marriage and painting some mediocre paintings, etc., but the good school system would not have produced William Hazlitt.

PROF. COMMAGER: I'm not surprised and I am pleased to find so much agreement here and I think both of us agree, Mr. Witman, to reject your very phrasing, namely that the schools shouldn't have clear cut objectives in advance. It is a very dangerous thing to set up a lot of concrete objectives and say schools should meet these. This would defeat much of the possibility of experimentation, many of those vagaries that produce the best things in society. And I would like to add this, and I think Professor Brogan will agree with me, that of all the societies, ours is the last one that ought to insist on this kind of conformity; one, because we are large enough to have tremendous variety; two, because our system is essentially pluralistic in the realm of religion, in politics and many other things; three, because we're still very much in the making -- we haven't jelled, we haven't crystallized the way older societies have, but we're in a state of experimentation and fluidity; and four, because it is very dangerous for any society to give in to the pressures of conformity in the educational realm, even if conformity sets up certain standards of what constitutes education. This doesn't mean I reject certain elementary desirable things about education. I think people ought to be able to spell, for example, and they ought to be able to compute, but to set up abstract standards of what our citizenship or what is an educated man is a very risky business, and riskier with us than with most people.

DR. WITMAN: If this is the case, then who are we going to have in this educational system? For whom is education designed? Who should be admitted to it? Is there any kind of a criterion by which we can make a judgment on this?

PROF. COMMAGER: I think we can agree here that you can't apply this generally. There are different criteria for different societies. For one thing, it depends a bit on how much money you have and what you can afford. I would say that in our society, we should have education for all who can profit from it, and we are rich enough to afford to provide this kind of education. When we say what's meant by profit from it, that's a very tough question.

DR. WITMAN: Who is going to decide who profits from it?

PROF. COMMAGER: Profit, not only to society, but profit to the individual.

PROF. BROGAN: I would say, first of all, that I agree with Professor Commager that the United States can afford a great deal of financial waste, but that wasn't quite the kind of waste I was thinking of, and why I insisted on the end product -- the person. It may be that it's not only no kindness, but definite unkindness to keep a boy or girl at school long after he wants to be at school, because he may have

something much better to do; he may have something very much better to do and he may not be dumb at all; he may be very bright.

PROF. COMMAGER: We're talking now of higher education pretty much -- nobody has to go to college.

PROF. BROGAN: Yes, but also I am thinking of the whole idea of conformity, even at the high school stage, but the point here I am trying to make is when in doubt, admit the fellow to college -- when in doubt give him an extra year of high school or what not, on the grounds that Mr. Commager has stated. But, if you expect everybody to do that, a lot of people are wasting what is their most valuable thing, their own time. We think of it mainly in terms of wasting public money, which could be serious enough because the money spent on one thing can't be spent on another; the money spent on the total misfit can't be spent on the very bright boy. But we also ought to think of the great waste of the young man or the young woman's time, hanging around against his or her will, in a way which we can all recognize, I think, if we distract or take our minds away from the state and think of families. There must be very few people in this room who haven't known families who, out of paternal pride, affection, and vanity, have forced people to do things that they really didn't want to do or need to do, etc., so that that's the kind of waste that worries me as much as the mere budgetary waste which can be afforded by the United States.

PROF. COMMAGER: That, of course, can be taken care of by somewhat firmer standards in the colleges and universities. If students can go, they should go, but if they can't maintain their standards, they should be dropped.

DR. WITMAN: I would like to take up the discussion again with an issue which Professor Commager made in his original statement, in which he delineated the broad aspects of education and took us away from the more limited higher education subject. Now, what is the relationship, if any, Professor Commager, between secondary education, higher education, adult education, etc.?

PROF. COMMAGER: What I had in mind -- there certainly is not time to elaborate on this -- is that a society as large and as varied as ours requires a great many different things from what's called an educational enterprise system. It requires, of course, specific skills. It requires very highly developed skills in the field of law, engineering, science, medicine, or whatever it happens to be. It also requires a population which is educated to the tasks of self-government and ordinary tasks of society. It requires all sorts of practical skills, that can not or should not, I think, be dealt with in the colleges, but should properly be dealt with in other educational institutions of one kind or another. It should take care of the needs and the demands of those who, for one reason or another, are through with formal education, either have leisure on their hands or have reached an age of retirement or something of that kind -- these should not merely be fobbed off with courses on Browning or courses on ceramics, but should and, I think, can be brought into the main stream of social and political interest of one kind or another. This is much too large to elaborate on -- the only point I make is that a large, a varied country such as ours with so many different demands upon it, and so many different interests, must not try to find any particular formula, but it must be prepared to use that talent for social inventiveness, for intellectual inventiveness as was used in the past. We've got to invent new devices of education, new forms of adult education, and not the old-fashioned forms -- new types of college education, perhaps that are somewhere in between the old higher education and the sort of thing taken care of by XYZ University that springs up to meet the demand of a local Rotary club. I don't think our inventiveness in this realm is exhausted, by any means.

PROF. BROGAN: I think it is extremely important to allow people to come into the higher educational system in the ordinary sense, to go to good colleges at any time of their lives because, not only are some people late developers, but the interest may suddenly come out. It is a well-known phenomenon that in distinguished academics that the true interest comes to them late in life. I could name a dozen people whose re-

putation, academic reputation, which is very high has, in fact, not been in the field in which they were originally, but came to them later. We're not all like the gentleman who went to college in the movies, Mr. Clifton Webb; we don't all like coming back to college and behaving like a freshman. And I think there is a great deal of talent lost that way in people who would like to come back into the main stream, not for the type of education Mr. Commager is talking about, but right into college because by the time they are forty, they discover that is what they really wanted to do. I am rather inclined to think that in England at any rate more talent is lost at that stage than at the much earlier stage of selection of a college at eighteen or whatever the age may be.

DR. WITMAN: I would like to ask one question that is worrying me and that is, how is all this going to be paid for? Where is the support for higher education and for an expanded higher education which we may need to anticipate going to come from?

PROF. COMMAGER: My point of view, to some extent, would rely on the experience Professor Brogan can so well lay before you. What has impressed me most about the contemplation of the British educational system is that in Britain the government, that is, through the Parliamentary Grants Committee, Parliament finances almost the whole of higher education, and it does this without, as far as I know -- Mr. Brogan will correct me here -- without any dangerous invasion of academic freedom, without any improper interference in the curriculum or anything else. For my part, I cannot see how we can do the kind of job in the colleges and universities, the technological schools and graduate and professional schools that our society requires to have done without a program of federal aid, without frankly recognizing that there is just as much to be said for federal aid, direct or indirect, to higher education as there is for federal aid, let us say, in the realm of public health and the realm of highways. How this is to be done without accompanying dangers is a matter upon which I think all of our educational statesmen should put their minds; that we have not again exhausted our inventiveness in this field seems to be clear.

PROF. BROGAN: Very briefly, a difficulty which I don't think is insuperable, but a great difficulty arises, or a difference arises, from something said much earlier by Mr. Commager. In Great Britain, the number of people who are thought to be in the higher educational system at any given moment, even if the target was reached, are only one-tenth of those inside the United States, and if you weight it by population, still only one-third -- it's less than a third, in fact. That means that all the institutions which would be aided are known, identified and exist already and have a reasonable uniformity of standards. I was on one of the committees of the University Advance Committee, and I'm seeing this from inside. You don't have to ask yourself the preliminary question, is the institution any good. What you could ask is, is the project any good, is the given thing any good, and that is fairly easy to measure objectively. I think the solution here might be to have to subsidize directly the very bright candidate and let him choose or her choose the institution to go to. It's true that some of them might go to schools for ballet, which might be a good thing -- I'm not a balletomane myself -- or tap-dancing, or applied cosmetics, but the really bright ones, if the examination is made seriously, the really good ones will themselves, in their own interests, look for the good institution, and that seems to me to get around the political difficulties. Otherwise, it's going to be very great in a country like this where there are 2,000. There are only 20 degree-giving institutions in Great Britain for a population of 50 million. There are 2,000-odd in this country for a population of 160 million. It's a different world, and I think the way to do it is to get the bright boy or girl and let him choose, and he won't be found rushing off to an institution started in the middle of the desert.

DR. WITMAN: Let's take our prize-winning question. It comes from Mr. Helmet Hirsch of Chicago, Illinois. This is his question, gentlemen. "Is not universal higher education an essential part of the idea of our American culture, just as the training of an elite belongs to other types of culture?"

PROF. COMMAGER: That is what the lawyers call a very leading question. It is also a very loaded question, and I would say if I must take it in this form, the answer is an unmistakable No. We don't want universal higher education. I don't know what it means. The only solution here is the one made some years ago that everyone should be given an AB at birth to solve the whole problem. If this is rephrased, perhaps.....

DR. WITMAN: Couldn't we compromise on "almost universal?"

PROF. COMMAGER: No, higher education for all those who by such tests as are devised to prove themselves competent to profit from it, I would say that that is an ideal of our democracy and a very good one. I do think it is a bit loaded too to contrast it to the training of an elite. While this is a correct description of 19th century education in almost all European countries and even in Britain, it is, I think, no longer a correct description of the situation in Europe and is certainly no longer a true description of the situation in Britain.

PROF. BROGAN: I agree, almost entirely, with what Mr. Commager has said. Actually, this is an example of the kind of thing I objected to. The word "democracy" is one of these words which do not regard the object of education as one. The educational system should have a certain characteristic because the United States is a democracy. You might as well say there ought to be two chambers in every graduate school because they've got a House and a Senate. The analogy is imperfect, to put it very mildly. Secondly, it can't be done. It's very simple. It's very simple for a reason of which anyone who has ever been a university teacher knows perfectly well -- there never will be enough universal college teachers who are any good. This is a problem very much ignored. If you just think of 20 million people -- well you have to be something like that in the colleges, but under this system it would have to have in the neighborhood of one and a half million college teachers. Now, that is a prospect which horrifies me, whatever it may do to you. There just aren't any people on that scale fit to be college teachers or fit to be teachers of any kind, so the thing falls to the ground -- it's not even an ideal -- it's not even a balloon -- it's one of these examples of a transfer of one order of ideas to a totally different field. About what Mr. Commager has said about the elite idea, you must remember that you can't help training an elite. Whatever you do with an educational system, you can't help training an elite. The total end for it, unless you deliberately blind the pupils -- some of them are going to be brighter when they come out than when they went in, but not always, and some are going to be a lot brighter. Nobody talks this way about sports. Nobody says the American has a universal right to run the mile in four minutes. No one says every American man should run like Roger Bannister and every American woman should be able to walk like Marilyn Monroe. Nobody talks this way except in the field of education. Nobody picks the college football team on these grounds or a college band, and when we get everyone to play the fiddle as well as Menuhin and run as well as Bannister, etc., etc., this will have some meaning. At the moment, it seems to me to have none. On the other hand, I've noted against the fact of this an awful lot of people would gain who are not now receiving higher education. The converse of that: they will only gain if a lot of people who are now getting higher education are pushed out -- not only because of money, because of time, but because of the teacher's time. Perhaps the true democratic ideal is to make the elite as big as possible, but it is not really a democratic ideal; it's not sense to say you must not produce an elite because whatever we do, we produce some kind of an elite. The difference is between a good elite and a bad elite. I think Chicago had an elite in Al Capone.

DR. WITMAN: Let's go down to our audience now and take some questions from them.

QUESTIONER: Dr. Brogan, should the age for college be lowered to sixteen for brilliant pupils?

PROF. BROGAN: Yes, I think so. I can see answers against it. People have gone to college much younger than that. The answers against it are social, psychological, etc., but I don't know whether a very bright boy suffers more from two years in college or two years marking time in a high school. On the whole, I am in favor of letting people who are very bright be as bright as they can be, as fast as they can be.

QUESTIONER: Professor Commager, are our American high schools preparing students sufficiently for college? How can we improve their educational background?

PROF. COMMAGER: If I could answer that, I shouldn't be here. I ought to be in charge of all the high schools of the country or something of that kind. The first answer is a great many of them are not preparing them for the kind of college that they would like to go to, and they are preparing them well enough for the kind of colleges, perhaps, that they do go to. As to how the college should be improved, that is a very large order indeed. I can't answer it offhand, except by one very elementary and simple suggestion, namely, that we might perhaps stop babying our high school students, stop pretending they are still children and let them do a bit more work.

QUESTIONER: Professor Commager, what is your opinion with regard to government subsidization of higher education, in particular through the tie-in with compulsory military service?

PROF. COMMAGER: I think I have already commented on that. I said I believe this is inevitable in the long run if we would have to have some form of federal support to higher education and that it rested upon our educational statesmen to devise some method which would effectively sterilize that aid so that it would not be accompanied by those very grave dangers which so often accompany big government when it goes into the intellectual realm.

DR. WITMAN: Does that satisfy you, sir? You had another phase of the question. You tied it in with compulsory military service. Did you want to pursue that still further?

PROF. COMMAGER: I don't see any specific connection here. It seems to me there is a practical connection in that the thing began with the G.I. Bill of Rights in one form but actually, federal aid to education began with the Federal Land Grants first worked out in 1785 and reestablished with the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 which set aside public land for state education systems and was vastly reinforced and elaborated by the Morrill Act of 1862 which again furnished the foundation for most of our state universities so that, in fact, we have a very long tradition of federal aid of an indirect character which has not, so far, proved to be dangerous to the integrity of these institutions.

PROF. BROGAN: I think, first of all, our higher education, as Mr. Commager said, is highly subsidized by the government and there is a danger, not of universal education, but of the government deciding that only things that are of military importance are worth subsidizing on a big scale. That's why an independent body, given an allowance of money to spend is better than the Pentagon, let us say, which will take an ad hoc short term utilitarian view of what is the object of education. That's why we go back to the beginning as once you think about your education as being anything but the people who are educated, you end up with projects which are everything but educational. You may produce a wonderful hydrogen bomb, but even that is not the whole aim of civilization.

QUESTIONER: Professor Brogan, what are the outstanding characteristics of an educated man?

PROF. BROGAN: An educational system, or a person who has received a formal education in his life will often in his life think he has been completely misled. It didn't describe the world he lived in; it didn't provide a means of living in a world he had to live in and gave him nothing to live for, is a non-educated man, even if he is covered with degrees. An educated man in that sense with an adequate life at a reasonable level has been educated. I think all education in the sense we are talking about should have a reasonable amount of intellectual content. I do not believe, I may say, in the great untruth of the wisdom of illiterate peasants. I have known too many illiterate peasants and, on the whole, their minds are not full of folk wisdom; they're full of superstition, etc. The happiest peasant societies like Denmark have a very high degree of literacy and the educated men and nature's noblemen, etc., -- I'll settle for a man with a reasonable degree of intellectual curiosity and knowledge which fits him to be a fairly rounded human being and also fits him to earn his living.

There are people who don't earn their living who are very satisfactory people, but they're not terribly common.

QUESTIONER: Professor Commager, who do you propose to stimulate the youth into professional, academic, that is, university careers when success and individual goals are defined by our own society in terms of money?

PROF. COMMAGER: I don't quite know that these two things are antithetical. It seems to me that many of the attractions held out to youth for going through college and professional school are precise pecuniary ones. Indeed, it seems to me we need stimulation in the other direction, that the emphasis should be rather less on the financial advantages of going to college or to law school, or to medical or dental or other schools. It was a good many years ago since Henry Adams wrote of his astonishment when he asked a young man why he was going to Harvard and the student said a Harvard degree means money to me in Chicago. That attitude is still widespread, perhaps less widespread at Harvard than certain other institutions. I think what we need is not so much stimulus here as it is to bring home to the young -- I'm not sure they really need it, the young are filled with intellectual curiosity -- bring home to perhaps larger numbers of the young the non-financial advantages of continuing education, and to persuade them into those areas of interest which do not appear to hold out the most attractive financial features.

QUESTIONER: I agree with your latter point, but I was referring specifically to training of professors and research people, in that the financial reward is not one as compared to, let's say, another field.

PROF. COMMAGER: I can give you a very quick answer, but it doesn't get us very far, and that is you can deal with this matter very simply by a proper income tax system which takes away the high rewards of certain activities and achieves a relative degree of equality such as pertains to much in Britain at the present time. But I very much doubt that the average young man says I would like to be a classical scholar, but I think it will pay me to be a dentist. I very much doubt that. I think the kind of young man who wants to be an engineer is not going to be dissuaded from that by the lure of music or the lure of something else. I think we can trust human nature to take care of those things.

QUESTIONER: Professor Commager, should a youth attend college before he had decided what type of work he is going to do?

PROF. COMMAGER: This is a very abstract question. The answer is he does. The answer is most people do and I think, on the whole, it is a very good thing. Here, I think Professor Brogan can throw a great deal of light on this problem because in Britain and to an even larger extent on the Continent, the decision perhaps not of a specific career, but of a type of career is made at a very early stage. I have always looked on this as a great hardship for the young who, in England, decide at the age of 12 or 13 or 14 whether they are going to go to the university or not and what kind of university training they are going to get. Our system generally allows this decision to be made toward the 3rd or 4th year of the university itself. As we can afford this, it works pretty well.

PROF. BROGAN: I agree entirely with Professor Commager for a very good reason. I started life in medical school and decided that I'd let my patients live. It seems to me that people decide what they want to do, unless they are terrifically concentrated, a natural mathematician -- absolutely first-class (there are only six in the world at the moment, let us say) isn't going to be diverted. He's a mathematician from six on; or musicians. Apart from that many young men know (I'm a father of young men) what they're going to do at 18 or at 20 and college gives them time to think, an opportunity to think, puts before their mind possibilities that maybe enter their parents' mind when it comes to that and also in good colleges, people change. They're subject to academic interests in the middle of the course. That ought to be permissible. I have known several very distinguished biologists who started life as classical scholars. I know one of the most brilliant physical chemists in the world who was a classical scholar at my college in Oxford. Suppose he had been asked at 18 what he wanted to do. He probably would have said he'd teach Greek in a high school, and how he's the secretary of the

Royal Society, so that the American system has this in its favor -- allowing people to decide late. The assumption, and that's why I'm against so many of these tests, the assumption that you know what people should do at 8 or at 12, 14, etc., seems to me complete illusion based on bad psychological techniques.

QUESTIONER: Professor Brogan, if you had a chance to go to college again, either in the United States or in Britain, which would you choose to do?

PROF. BROGAN: I have gone to colleges in Scotland, England, and the United States. I think that will have to answer the question.

DR. WITMAN: Professor Brogan obviously has gone to colleges that teach diplomacy.

QUESTIONER: Professor Commager, how is American society to provide for the increased number of college graduates vocationally and, more important, in terms of utilization of their cultural knowledge?

PROF. COMMAGER: Again I am a little puzzled at the way this is put. There is no abstract thing called society which makes up its mind to make certain provisions. These things pretty much take care of themselves. If you mean the practical question, is there going to be a surplus of intellectuals, with no jobs to do as did, I think, happen in many European countries or appeared to happen, then I think that is a meaningful question. But it is not as meaningful a question as it was sometime ago. After all, machinery has taken care of most of the menial and semi-menial tasks. We're cutting down more and more on the things that have to be done by hand and making increasing demands on the things that have to be done by brains and by administrative talent, and I suspect that our society is going to need far more engineers and far more able administrators and far more doctors and teachers than it is now making provision for, and that the great labor shortage is going to be in these areas, rather than in the more elementary areas, let us say, of agriculture or industry in time to come.

QUESTIONER: I think the second part of my question was more important. Do you feel that there is an outlet in terms of theatre and in terms of art for people who have gone through a liberal arts education, rather than vocationally?

PROF. COMMAGER: Do you mean that they should devote their whole career to this? I don't think this is anything you can plan on. You don't start training people to be musicians or to be artists or to enjoy the theatre. These things are byproducts of a total education, and a system which makes up its mind that we are going to have to provide X percent of musicians or going to have to instill love of music in all our engineers is one that's going to come a cropper. I think if you expose the young to the delights of music or to the advantages of art, those who are susceptible to these things will take them. I think one of the great failings of most of our colleges and universities is that there is not enough such exposure and another great failing is that there is not enough self-education. I am sure Professor Brogan could talk at some length on the great advantages of the European and, above all, the Oxford, Cambridge system here, where the students educate each other, rather than depending too much on the administrative organization of the university to provide the education.

QUESTIONER: Professor Brogan, do you think an education would be valuable to a person who is only slightly above average scholastically and has to work part time to pay for expenses, so that he had no time to participate in extra-curricular activities that the school might provide?

PROF. BROGAN: It would have to start with what was the standard above which he was very slightly. That might mean he wasn't absolutely brilliant or it might mean he could barely read or write. I think a lot of people do go to college in all countries for wrong reasons. One reason while you still get the large unemployed groups in Italy and France is that too many people just go to college because it's social promotion. If you go to college for that reason and, at the same time, can't take part in the things which lead to social promotion, you are purely wasting your time, and would be much better on a job. And for the last think, which I had in mind at the very beginning, even in the most athletic college, so to speak, nobody really likes to be regarded quite dumb and they might as well not expose themselves to this discovery as ordinary standards go. On the whole, I think too many people of barely mediocre abilities go for the wrong reason to colleges in all countries, but more in the United States because more people go to college.

QUESTIONER: Professor Commager, to what extent does the social character of the type of college graduate that you envision able to meet and fit into the needs of our present acquisitive society?

PROF. COMMAGER: I think perhaps too well. The college student is just an ordinary member of society. He is a product of society. He is informed for 18 years before he gets to college. College can do relatively little to change him. It is rather surprising that college manages to do as much as it does to give him different ideas and different interests, of one kind or another. I've not yet seen any real problem of adjusting the college student to the needs of society or society to the college student. I think perhaps what we need is a little more maladjustment than we have, rather than less. I think a society with more eccentrics, more people who are dissatisfied with the kind of society is better than a society of conformists. One final observation here, I think to call our society an acquisitive society is using a lot of loaded words. I don't know any society that isn't acquisitive in this particular sense, and you are saying that in rather a bad sense. Everybody's acquisitive, but people want to acquire different things and for different purposes. Most scholars that I know of are very acquisitive, not necessarily of bank accounts; oh, they wouldn't reject them, but perhaps of books or of experiences of one kind or another. There is nothing in and of itself wrong with an acquisitive society.

PROF. BROGAN: I would like to say that I think English society doesn't produce enough people with acquisitive instincts. The one thing that is wrong with Oxford and Cambridge is that too few people go into business from it and get an idea that business is beneath them. In most cases, it is above them.

QUESTIONER: Professor Brogan, in the English public schools, up to what age are children required to attend? Should children not interested in education have to attend?

PROF. BROGAN: Theoretically 16; in practice 15; and anybody who likes can stay to 18. I think if you take the view that people staying against their will at school are staying there to learn the things of the book type -- well, it is a waste of time, but as Mr. Commager said earlier, there are other things. They are kept off the labor market. They are taught to brush their teeth. They are given a number of useful habits which they might not acquire otherwise. The illusion is that they are getting what is called, in the old sense, an education. They're not. But this is a different problem from college education because, presumably, they can brush their teeth by the time they go to college. I think that the problem of the total academic misfit which is serious in college is only a minor nuisance earlier. As long as it is recognized that it is so, and as long as the school is not organized to deal mainly with the people, but only there to keep them off the labor market or keep them away from games or anything else, and as long as the school is not organized around these people -- who the school doesn't make dull, they are dull or different for various reasons -- they could probably gain a lot. But it is undemocratic to say it, but the school should not be organized around them more than giving them minimum social habits which in primitive societies are given by rituals, etc. That is not what we are, strictly speaking, talking about education in this sense. I don't think any harm is done by doing that. Good is done as long as there is no confusion as to what is being done.

DR. WITMAN: I'm sorry that we can't continue these questions from the audience, but we have come to that sad moment when we must end our discussion. We have been talking about the subject of "Education: For Whom and For What?" and we have sought to analyze this subject in several categories. We have talked about the purposes of education, although Professor Commager challenged me on the use of that term "purposes" indicating that perhaps we should construe education as having no purpose. We talked about "for whom" "abilities" and all of these other questions involving support, financial assistance and the relationship of all aspects of education.

Thank you very much, Professor Commager and Professor Brogan.

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